Author's response to reviews

Title: Validation and findings of a food environment survey in three urban environments of Kunming, China

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Dear Dr. Vargas:

Per your suggestion, we have rewritten the paper to include empirical data on BMI levels for adolescents in our study area. I should mention however, that the original goal of our manuscript was to document the development of a food environment survey instrument for China using U.S. NEMS as an existing guideline, and with the survey, to describe variations in the food environment within Kunming city, China. Our intent was not to describe an epidemiology study comparing food environments to obesity levels. As you may be aware, within-city neighborhood-level obesity rate data are generally not accessible. Even in the U.S., only coarse county-level obesity data are readily available from BRFSS.

In response to your request, we have worked non-stop over the last few weeks to seek permission in China to collect and use adolescent BMI data in our study area. This has required numerous MOUs, human subjects approvals, and additional fieldwork to collect and analyze the data in order to provide validation that indeed, findings from our food environment survey instrument relate well to observed adolescent BMI levels within the city. We do believe that this has strengthened the paper considerably.

I hope that this fully addresses your concerns about the lack of validation data, and that the manuscript can swiftly complete peer-review.

Respectfully,

Edmund Seto, PhD, Senior Author
Associate Professor, School of Public Health